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STUDY PROJECT

KOREA TO KALIMANTAN AND BEYOND: THE EMPLOYMENT OF UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES IN MILITARY CIVIC ACTION IN THE PACIFIC COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

BY

COLONEL ALLAN W. KEENER, SF

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analysis of the reasons for its success or failure. Success or failure is defined in terms of the degree to which the MCA program aided the country in achieving internal stability. From the analysis of each of the six MCA programs, issues are raised which our national leaders must address in determining whether or not a proposed MCA program in a given country has a reasonable chance of accomplishing U.S. security objectives in the country. Also, recommendations were made to our national leaders concerning the need to create a Total Army force structure with which to conduct MCA in the PACOM AOR. This force structure is an amalgam of existing force structures and, therefore, is feasible given current budget constraints. The study concludes that MCA is a viable instrument of U.S. national policy and that increased funding should be provided for U.S. Army forces to conduct MCA in the PACOM AOR. This is a cost effective alternative to their employment in combat should instability threaten the existence of a friendly nation in the area.

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THE EMPLOYMENT OF UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES IN MILITARY CIVIC ACTION
IN THE PACIFIC COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
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KOREA TO KALIMANTAN AND BEYOND:
THE EMPLOYMENT OF UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES IN MILITARY CIVIC ACTION
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study will examine the role of military civic action (MCA) as a tool for execution of U.S. strategy in the Pacific Command (PACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR). It will evaluate the contributions of selected MCA programs conducted by U.S. Army forces with regard to the achievement of U.S. security objectives in the area. The study's underlying objective is to determine how U.S. Army forces in the PACOM AOR should be organized to advise or assist in MCA and when they should be employed in the task.¹

The major chapters of the study, Chapters II through VII, are devoted to evaluating the accomplishments of U.S. Army forces in each of six countries in the PACOM AOR where they advised or assisted in MCA. Each of these chapters looks at four factors (political, social, economic, and military) which can affect a country's stability.²

The next chapter, Chapter VIII, reviews the types of organizational structures which the Active Component (AC) of the U.S. Army has employed in the conduct of MCA in the PACOM AOR. In turn, Chapter IX reviews the types of organizational structures employed in the PACOM AOR by the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR). They draw the conclusion that with proper organization, planning, and training, both components can successfully perform MCA. Each component brings its own particular strengths and weaknesses to the effort. In many instances, they can best be employed in a complementary manner.

The following chapter, Chapter X, raises the issues which our national leadership must address with regard to the conduct of MCA in the PACOM AOR. It identifies the criteria for employment of U.S. Army forces in MCA. The chapter discusses force structure alternatives in terms of both desirability and feasibility in view of the ongoing reductions in the defense budget. It stresses, however, that the decision to use U.S. Army forces in MCA will require advocacy by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to overcome the reluctance of the Department of State (DOS) and the Congress to employ such means. Additionally, the use of U.S. Army forces in MCA will require a commitment by OSD to create the force structure necessary to effectively conduct MCA. Within the Department of Defense (DOD), OSD is both the policymaker and treasurer for U.S. military forces and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that U.S. Army forces have the capability to contribute to the achievement of U.S. security objectives in the PACOM AOR. The study ends with a summary and, after conclusions, recommends a course of action for the nation's leaders.

Before proceeding to the case studies in Chapters II through VII, it is necessary to look at MCA in terms of its background and definition and of its role in execution of U.S. strategy.

BACKGROUND AND DEFINITION

"There is nothing either new or special in the notion that military forces have constructive assets which can and should be shared with the civil instrumentalities of their state for the mutual benefit of the government, the people, and the security organizations themselves."³ The United States has applied this concept almost from the beginning of the Republic. Notable examples of this practice abound in U.S. History.

Among them are the role of the U.S. Army in exploring and surveying newly acquired territories; supporting the construction of transcontinental railroad lines; and directing the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression.⁴

Although the concept of employing U.S. Army forces in the foregoing manner is almost as old as the Republic itself, the term civic action is of relatively recent (and possibly non-U.S.) origin. The creation of the term is variously attributed to Ramon Magsaysay (late Defense Minister and President of the Republic of the Philippines), members of his staff, or Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Edward Lansdale (Magsaysay's principal U.S. military advisor). Whoever the author, the term was subsequently adopted by the U.S. defense establishment. Additionally, the concept of employing U.S. Army forces in civic action was revived and expanded to encompass its non-domestic use.⁵

The Draper Commission (appointed in 1958) studied civic action successes in the Republic of Korea and the Republic of the Philippines earlier in the decade in arriving at its recommendations concerning the U.S. Military Assistance Program (MAP).⁶ The adoption by Congress in 1959 of the recommendation of the Draper Commission that civic action become an element of the MAP gave further impetus to the concept of employing U.S. Army forces in (at least) an advisory role in civic action.^{7, 8} Enactment by Congress in 1961 of a new Act for International Development sustained this impetus.⁹

DOD was driven by Congressional enactments and pressure from President Kennedy to come to grips with the reality of the U.S. military and especially the U.S. Army role in civic action. Compounding the task was the fact that a workable DOD definition of civic action did not exist.

The fact that non-DOD governmental agencies (such as the Agency for International Development (AID)) also had a role in civic action further compounded the task. However, in 1962, DOD arrived at the term "military civic action" which has been accepted by both the executive and legislative branches of the government as defining the role of military forces in civic action from that time forward:

The use of preponderantly indigenous military forces on projects useful to the local population at all levels in such fields as education, training, public works, agriculture, transportation, communications, health, sanitation, and others contributing to economic and social development, which would also serve to improve the standing of the military forces with the population. (US forces may at times advise or assist in military civic actions in overseas areas.)¹⁰

The latter sentence of the definition has prescribed the role of DOD and particularly that of the U.S. Army in MCA (to advise or assist) in various overseas AORs from the early days of the Kennedy Administration forward.¹¹

U.S. Army forces actively advised or assisted in MCA in a multitude of overseas areas (Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam, to name just a few) until the latter days of the Nixon Administration. However, by 1974, the active involvement of the U.S. Army in MCA began to wind down.¹² U.S. Army forces were no longer authorized to conduct MCA unless it was either incidental to the provision, sale, or lease of defense articles and services or pursuant to an Economy Act order from AID.^{13, 14, 15} DOS through the International Development Cooperation Agency and its agent, AID, assumed the leading role in civic action.^{16, 17, 18} AID has resisted U.S. Army involvement in civic action in any form since the Nixon years unless it supported AID's long range plans and was the least costly alternative. A continuing concern within AID seems to be that the

unsolicited employment of U.S. Army forces in any form of civic action has the potential to mortgage AID's future by forcing it to sustain civic action programs not of its own choosing at the expense of its own programs.^{19, 20} This continuing state of affairs hinders any effort by the U.S. Army to widen its involvement in MCA beyond that which it has played since 1974.

The foregoing situation was not remedied by passage of the Stevens Amendment (effective 1 October 1984) which granted DOD authority to use operations and maintenance (OMA) appropriations for the conduct of humanitarian and civic assistance (HCA) activities incidental to Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) coordinated or directed exercises.²¹ U.S. Army involvement in MCA also was not widened by the later enactment of a new chapter to Title 10 of the U.S. Code (effective 1 October 1986) which granted DOD broader authority to use OMA appropriations for the conduct of HCA.²² Neither piece of legislation expanded DOD's authority to employ U.S. Army forces to advise or assist indigenous military forces in the conduct of MCA.

ROLE IN EXECUTION OF U.S. STRATEGY

The U.S. strategy for low intensity conflict (LIC) recognizes that low intensity conflicts can affect U.S. interests "in the most fundamental ways". The strategy then goes on to specify the means by which the U.S. will deal with LIC "when it is in U.S. interest to do so".²³ Among those means are at least two in which employment of civic action could be used to support a host nation's internal defense and development (IDAD) strategy and thereby implement U.S. LIC strategy. The applicable means

are to:

Work to ameliorate the underlying causes of conflict in the Third World by promoting economic development and the growth of democratic political institutions.

....
Take measures to strengthen friendly nations facing internal or external threats to their independence and stability by employing appropriate instruments of U.S. power. Where possible, action will be taken early-before instability leads to widespread violence; and emphasis will be placed on those measures which strengthen the threatened regime's long-term capability to deal with threats to its freedom and stability.²⁴

The National Command Authorities can direct U.S. Army forces to advise or assist in support of a host nation's IDAD strategy.²⁵ This assistance can range from Security Assistance at the low end of the conflict spectrum to logistical support at the high end.²⁶ Doctrinally, U.S. Army forces can be employed in MCA throughout the spectrum to advise or assist a host nation's military forces in using nonmilitary means to ward off insurgency or, should proaction fail, to counter insurgency.²⁷ These means may include a broad range of economic and social development activities, such as road building, well digging, and construction of basic health facilities. However, the reality of MCA will fall far short of its rhetoric without adequate policy, fiscal, and legislative support.

ENDNOTES

1. Any of the armed forces can participate in MCA. All services have active programs, but the U.S. Army has been singled out for the purposes of this study because of its greater land dispersion, traditionally closer relationships with civilians, and more varied functions which cause it to bear the major share of MCA responsibility.

2. U.S. Army War College, Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) Case Studies, p. D-1.

3. Harry F. Walterhouse, A Time to Build: Military Civic Action: Medium for Economic Development and Social Reform, p. 9.

4. U.S. Department of the Army, Army Historical Series: American Military History, pp. 118-120; 179-180; 295-299; 412-414.

5. Walterhouse, pp. 9-10.

6. Interview with Anthony J. Auletta, U.S. Department of the Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, Civil Affairs Branch, 19 January 1990. (hereafter referred to as "Auletta").

7. U.S. President's Committee to Study the U.S. Military Assistance Program, Conclusions concerning the Mutual Security Program (Draper Report), Part 1, pp. 42-43; Part 2, p. 121.

8. U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., Public Law 108.

9. U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., Public Law 195.

10. Walterhouse, pp. 12-15.

11. U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 1-02, p. 230.

12. Auletta.

13. U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., United States Code, 1982, Vol. 9, Title 22, sec. 2302, p. 414.

14. U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., United States Code, 1982, Vol. 9, Title 22, sec. 2754, p. 608.

15. U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., United States Code, 1982, Vol. 13, Title 31, sec. 1535, pp. 403-404.

16. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 41-10, p. 3-6.

17. U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., United States Code, 1982, Vol. 9, Title 22, sec. 2382, p. 474.

18. U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., United States Code, 1982, Vol. 9, Title 22, sec. 2151, pp. 328-329.
19. Auletta.
20. The following is a contemporary example of resistance/concern within AID: "AID medical officials in Honduras, for example, have strongly criticized the [Defense] Department's use of a rapid succession of short-term efforts to apply high technology medical care with little chance for followup. AID's programs are required to emphasize self sustaining community-based health programs." U.S. Army War College, Theater Planning and Operations for Low Intensity Conflict Environments: A Practical Guide to Legal Considerations, p. I-34.
21. U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., Public Law 473. Note: Similar provisions have been enacted for each subsequent fiscal year through fiscal year 1990.
22. U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., United States Code, 1988, Vol. 3, Title 10, sec. 401-406, p. 752.
23. Ronald Reagan, National Security Strategy of the United States, p. 34.
24. Ibid.
25. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-20 (Final Draft), pp. 2-1; 2-35. (hereafter referred to as "FM 100-20").
26. James E. Trinniman, Midnight Review of LIC, p. 62. Cited with special permission of Mr. Trinniman.
27. FM 100-20, p. 2-2.

CHAPTER II

KOREA

In August 1948, as a result of elections in that previous May, the 17 million Koreans living in the southern half of the Korean Peninsula formed the Republic of Korea. Their President was the autocratic Syngman Rhee. U.S. military occupation government terminated and all U.S. military forces except for a handful of advisors were withdrawn by June 1949. The principal preoccupation of the Korean elite prior to the U.S. withdrawal had been the attainment of total sovereignty. No consideration was given to the need for national development during and after the U.S. occupation. This narrow outlook hampered the new government from the outset. As a consequence, it totally failed in meeting many of its responsibilities to its people.^{1, 2}

SOURCES OF INSTABILITY

The country's ruling elite was drawn from its social upper class. However, its members were ill-prepared to run the country because the Japanese, during almost 40 years of occupation, had consigned them to subordinate political, administrative, and management levels. There was virtually no middle class. The peasantry consisted of small farmers who formed a stable and productive backbone for the country. There appears to have been little or no social disaffection among the peasantry.³ However, the unemployed urban poor were a significant source of instability.⁴

The economic condition of the country was parlous. It had virtually no natural resources and all manufacturing of any significance was located in the Communist North. It was, however, agriculturally self sufficient.⁵

Militarily, the Republic of Korea was in extremely poor condition. Although it had a large standing army, it was ill-trained, ill-disciplined, and ill-equipped. When, on 25 June 1950, the North Korean Army invaded across the 38th Parallel, it was only due to U.S. and United Nations (UN) intervention that the entire country was not overrun. A small perimeter around Pusan was all of the Republic of Korea that remained free of North Korean domination.^{6, 7}

During the remainder of 1950, UN forces drove North almost to the Chinese Border and then were driven back below the 38th Parallel. By January 1951, they occupied a line which was almost one-half of the way back to the former Pusan Perimeter. By July 1951, UN forces had fought their way back to the 38th Parallel where, despite some positional warfare, they remained for the remainder of the conflict.⁸

The Republic of Korea was a devastated country after having suffered two Communist onslaughts and two UN offensives. The task then became to completely rebuild the country.⁹

MCA PROGRAMS

At the outbreak of the War, there had been a large U.S. mission in Korea which managed civic action. Its totally civilian staff departed upon the outbreak of hostilities. After July 1951, when the military situation became stabilized, some of its personnel returned, but not in sufficient numbers to accomplish the mission. Few civilians were willing

to serve in the austere Korean environment. As a consequence, it became necessary to turn to U.S. Army forces for major assistance. The Korean Civil Assistance Command (KCAC) became the source of personnel to accomplish the mission. KCAC continued both as a source of personnel and of technical operations supervision until a new civilian organization could be created. It is interesting to note that many former KCAC soldiers went to work for the civilian agency upon their release from active duty.¹⁰

The initial MCA activities were marked both by the lack of unity of effort and unity of command among the UN, Republic of Korea Army, DOS, Economic Cooperation Administration, and various elements of the U.S. Army. The mission was accomplished despite their conflicting efforts. The KCAC which has been previously mentioned was created to unify the MCA effort. The organization performed successfully.¹¹

U.S. Army forces were employed in support of the overall MCA effort through a program called Armed Forces Assistance to Korea (AFAK). This program effectively employed voluntary troop labor and U.S. public assistance programming to support Republic of Korea self-help efforts.¹²

Troop units of company size or larger continued to maintain their capacity to repel a further Communist onslaught should it occur. However, the soldiers concurrently volunteered their time and labor in support of a comprehensive recovery effort. Korean leaders stated requirements; Korean agencies provided indigenous materials; and U.S. Army forces provided engineering skills, equipment, and materials that were otherwise unavailable. The fruits of this effort were new schools, hospitals, and civic buildings, land reclamation, and improvement of public health and transportation facilities. As of 30 September 1960, more than 4,000

projects had been completed. This effort was of great benefit to the Korean people and the Republic of Korea because it helped them to help themselves. This contributed greatly to their collective sense of self-worth and concurrently prompted a favorable attitude toward the military. An additional benefit was its impact on the morale of U.S. Army forces who were given the opportunity to spend their time productively rather than to remain in waiting for an offensive which never came.^{13, 14}

ANALYSIS

The Korean War MCA effort showed conclusively that U.S. Army forces can be effectively employed in relief and rehabilitation operations. It also showed that they could be employed in situations where civilians were unwilling or unable to work. Finally, it showed that MCA: 1) is supported by the soldiers involved; 2) wins friends for the armed forces performing it; 3) stimulates civilian self-help; and 4) does not degrade military readiness. The Korean effort did not squarely address the issue of countering insurgency, because this was not a significant problem due to the lack of an organized and effective effort by by-passed enemy troops and indigenous guerrillas. It did, however, show that MCA can effectively address sources of instability which an organized and effective guerrilla force would attempt to exploit.

ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Army, Department of the Army Pamphlet 550-41, pp. 25-26. (hereafter referred to as "DA Pam 550-41").
2. Harry F. Walterhouse, A Time to Build; Military Civic Action: Medium for Economic Development and Social Reform, pp. 74-76.
3. Ibid.
4. DA Pam 550-41, pp. 24-25.
5. Walterhouse, pp. 74-76.
6. Ibid.
7. Dennis M. Drew and Donald M. Snow, The Eagle's Talons; The American Experience at War, pp. 248-250.
8. Ibid., pp. 250-256.
9. Walterhouse, p.77.
10. Ibid., pp. 77-78.
11. Ibid., pp. 76-78.
12. Ibid., pp. 77-78.
13. Ibid.
14. Drew and Snow, p. 256.

CHAPTER III

PHILIPPINES

At the same time that a conventional war was being fought in Korea, an equally fierce unconventional struggle was being waged in the Republic of the Philippines.¹ This chapter will be devoted to this other seminal event in the history of civic action. It is being included because it illustrates both the effectiveness of MCA in countering insurgency and the employment of predominantly U.S. Army forces in an advisory role in MCA.

SOURCES OF INSTABILITY

By 1950, the Republic of the Philippines had enjoyed almost four years of independence.² Although its ruling hierarchy and bureaucracy had been prepared for eventual independence by the U.S., this did not guarantee absolute success in running a democratic government. The ruling hierarchy tended to be drawn from a few wealthy land-owning families who were largely interested in perpetuating their economic status. Those who did not hold positions due to family ties often bought their way into positions of authority and then used these positions to enrich themselves at public expense. The most recent elections had been classic examples of fraud and terrorism.³

In addition to the wealthy landowners, Philippine society consisted of a small middle class and a large class of tenant farmers who were seemingly bound in eternal economic servitude to the wealthy landowners.

The peasants had no access to education; their basic health needs were unmet; their perception was that the government just didn't care.⁴

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Police Constabulary (PC) were poorly trained as a counterinsurgency force. The soldiers and police often preyed on the civilian populace to obtain money and food to support themselves and their families because of inadequate pay. AFP and PC conducted few counter guerrilla operations and did not even adequately defend the populace from guerrilla deprivations/influence. Needless to say, the overall attitude toward the military was negative.⁵

The foregoing circumstances made the Republic of the Philippines ripe for insurgency and the Hukbalahap (Huk) insurgents capitalized on it. The Huk were the guerrilla arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines and they became a significant military force during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines during World War II. When denied participation in the government in 1949, they began a campaign of terror and guerrilla warfare which threatened the very existence of democratic government.⁶

MCA PROGRAMS

In 1950, the competent and incorruptible Ramon Magsaysay was appointed Defense Minister and commenced to build an effective counterinsurgency program. One of the key elements of this program was MCA. Magsaysay was aided in his efforts by U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Edward Lansdale and other (primarily Army) advisors who were assigned to the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group--Philippines (JUSMAG--Phil). These advisors contributed to the MCA effort both with advice and U.S. financial and in-kind assistance.⁷

By helping Magsaysay to obtain U.S. financial assistance to pay the

AFP and PC a "living wage", JUSMAG--Phil helped to end the predatory conduct of AFP and PC forces against the populace. The armed forces could adequately support themselves and their families and no longer needed to extort money or food. This was a significant contribution to the improvement of the image of the AFP and the PC. Other efforts undertaken with the advice and assistance of U.S. Advisors included such efforts as policing the 1951 elections; providing medical treatment to civilian casualties of the counterinsurgency effort; providing free legal assistance to the peasants in their battles against landowners and bureaucrats; and initiating a land distribution program.⁸

The latter program was supervised by a Republic of the Philippines civil affairs organization patterned after its U.S. counterparts. It developed an effective program of MCA which provided land, housing, seed, livestock, farming expertise and a supporting infrastructure (such as schools, health clinics, and roads). Former Huks, landless farmers, and AFP veterans were given an opportunity to make a new life for themselves. Government startup loans had reasonable payback terms so that the people did not become trapped in economic servitude to the government.⁹

The Huk rebellion collapsed due to Magsaysay's far-sighted efforts and the advice and support which he had received from his U.S. advisors. This was not to say that there were no longer root causes of instability which MCA and other programs were needed to address. Many of the social and economic inequities and the endemic corruption continued unabated. However, it could be said, that MCA was a success in that it was of genuine benefit to much of the populace and dramatically improved the public image and the actual performance of the AFP and the PC.^{10, 11}

Magsaysay's successes as Defense Minister led him to the presidency

where he was in an even better position to continue to address the causes of instability in Philippine society. Unfortunately, his untimely death in an airplane crash prevented Magsaysay from continuing his campaign.¹²

Subsequently, inept and corrupt leadership led the Philippines back down the road to instability. This growing instability has not been overcome to date despite the continuation of significant Republic of the Philippines MCA coupled with advice and assistance from Special Action Force Asia from 1962 to 1974 and other U.S. sources (such as JUSMAG--Phil and USAR civic action teams) thereafter.^{13, 14}

ANALYSIS

In addition to the lessons learned in Korea, the Philippine experience showed that MCA, if appropriately supported, could help counter insurgency. It also graphically pointed out the need for the political, social, and economic leaders of a country to actively support MCA both at its inception and for many years thereafter if it was to achieve long-term results. Without continuing support, sacrifice, and competent and incorruptible leadership, MCA will ultimately fail.

ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Army War College, Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) Case Studies, p. C-11. (hereafter referred to as "LIC Case Studies").
2. Ibid., p. C-52.
3. Ibid., pp. C-15 - C-18; C-39 - C-40; C-73 - C-75.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., pp. C-83 - C-88.
6. Ibid., pp. C-23 - C-38; C-66 - C-77.
7. Ibid., pp. C-89 - C-121.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., pp. C-99 - C-102.
10. Ibid., pp. C-138 - C-151.
11. Harry P. Walterhouse, A Time to Build: Military Civic Action: Medium for Economic Development and Social Reform, pp. 89-90.
12. LIC Case Studies, pp. C-147 - C-149.
13. Charles M. Simpson III, Inside the Green Berets, pp. 206-208.
14. Interview with Herbert L. Altshuler, COL, U.S. Department of the Army, 351st Civil Affairs Command, Operations and Plans Division, Mountain View, 18 February 1990.

CHAPTER IV

INDONESIA

The Republic of the United States of Indonesia (later the Republic of Indonesia) gained its independence from the Netherlands in December 1949. Its first leader was Achmed "Bung" Sukarno, the leader of the independence movement. Although Sukarno was Marxist-oriented,¹ the U.S. maintained a hands-off policy with regard to his regime. For instance, when anti Communist rebels threatened his government in 1958, the U.S. did not seek its overthrow. In fact, in August 1958, after Sukarno had broken the rebellion, the U.S. government began to provide military assistance to his government.²

SOURCES OF INSTABILITY

The leadership of the country consisted of Sukarno and his followers. Essentially, they had been the leadership of the revolution against the country's colonial masters, the Dutch. Much like the original government in Korea, Sukarno and his followers had not been well prepared to take over the responsibilities of national leadership from the country's colonial masters. The government was marked by ineptitude and corruption.^{3, 4}

Like most Asian countries, Indonesia was characterized by great disparities in wealth. The peasants had little or nothing despite the country's immense natural wealth in minerals and oil and its great

agricultural capacity. Much of the country was undeveloped or underdeveloped and there was little capacity for self-improvement. The country was riven by factionalism which continued unabated up until at least the time of Sukarno's overthrow.^{5, 6}

The armed forces essentially ran the country. They provided the leadership for the majority of the government's ministries and administered the regional and local governments. Sukarno relied heavily on the military to help with the improvement of the country's parlous economic situation. This caused the military to become heavily involved in MCA.⁷

MCA PROGRAMS

The Indonesian MCA program of the early 1960s was perceived by U.S. observers to be the epitome of a potentially successful HN MCA effort. The armed forces concentrated their MCA efforts primarily at the village level. The thrust of their program was to increase agricultural production through increasing tilled acreage and improved techniques. To increase industrial production, the program concentrated on development of cottage industries and cooperatives and construction of storage facilities and farm-to-market roads. The military also increased its efforts in: 1) public health, 2) building of schools and churches, 3) training programs for adults, 4) welfare and rehabilitation programs for the indigent, 5) standardization and improvement of local administration, and 6) management of resettlement efforts. U.S. Army forces assisted with the preceeding efforts through mobile training teams (MTT) and provision of materials.⁸

Unfortunately the foregoing efforts did not effectively address the

root causes of dissatisfaction with the Sukarno Government. It appears that one of the main reasons was that they were aimed more at perpetuation of the current system rather than addressing legitimate societal grievances. Sukarno became increasingly anti-Western and pro-Chinese. However, despite this stance, the increasingly more powerful Indonesian Communist Party attempted his overthrow in September 1965. The coup was defeated by General Suharto after a military takeover of the government and a massacre of the Communists.⁹

In March 1966, Sukarno formally relinquished executive power to Suharto. A year later, Suharto was elected President and has remained in power to the present. Suharto has realigned his country with the West and directed his efforts toward improving the country's economic conditions (rice shortages and inflation) and defeating the residual Communist insurgency. The advent of Suharto's administration set the stage for Act II of U.S. involvement in MCA in Indonesia.^{10, 11}

In 1967, U.S. involvement in civic action resumed in Indonesia under the auspices of AID. Its thrust was to advise and assist the Indonesian armed forces with an updated and intensified version of their Sukarno Era MCA program. In 1969, SAFAsia was directed by the Commander in Chief, U.S. Army Pacific, the CINCPAC Army Component Commander, to coordinate with the Defense Liaison Mission (DLM) Indonesia concerning possible MCA support.¹²

After a survey of Indonesian MCA needs, it was determined that training was the first priority. Indonesian MCA had been conducted on an ad hoc basis. It had no planning objectives or goals and was too decentralized. An MCA training program for Indonesian officers was subsequently initiated that provided both academic and hands-on training

In MCA for district chiefs from throughout the Archipelago. An offshoot of the hands-on training was the conduct of a highly accurate population census which if extrapolated indicated that the Indonesian population was about twice as high as the official government figures.¹³

In addition to MCA training, the soldiers of SAFAsia worked with the Indonesian military to inventory, repair and assemble, and put to use millions of dollars of equipment provided by AID which the armed forces lacked the capability to assemble and operate. The equipment had been stored ever since its delivery rather than being used in the conduct of MCA. A stone crusher was placed in service in Sumatra providing an abundant supply of crushed rock needed for road construction. The native labor force which had previously crushed the rock by hand was not displaced, however, but put to use hauling large rocks to feed the crusher. Also, Indonesian Army engineers were trained to maintain and repair the equipment. Another prime example of SAFAsia's role in MCA in Indonesia was the advice and assistance it rendered in the repair, assembly, and initial operation of a giant sawmill on Kalimantan (formerly South Borneo). The sawmill was desperately needed to provide adequate quantities of lumber for the construction of housing for resettlement projects. Like the rock crusher, the Indonesians did not have the capacity to place the mill into service. Over an 18 month period, SAFAsia soldiers worked with the Indonesians to repair, assemble, and place the sawmill in operation. Once again the Indonesians were trained to maintain and repair the complex piece of equipment.¹⁴

ANALYSIS

Although the foregoing activities of SAFAsia did not help the

Indonesians miraculously solve their economic problems, it did help them to develop an increasingly effective MCA program and to begin to address long standing economic and social problems in a meaningful manner. Almost 20 years later, the legacy of SAFAsia endures in the Indonesian military's continuing commitment to MCA and the higher degree of stability which it has brought to the country. Although not the overwhelming success of AFAK or the Magsaysay programs, this was effective MCA, because of the commitment of relatively honest and competent leadership to address the ills of a country.

ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Army, Department of the Army Pamphlet 550-39, pp. xxiv-xxvi. (hereafter referred to as "DA Pam 550-39").
2. Facts on File, Indonesia: The Sukarno Years, pp. 64-75.
3. DA Pam 550-39, pp. xxiv-xxvi; 21-24; 46-53.
4. Harry F. Walterhouse, A Time to Build: Military Civic Action: Medium for Economic Development and Social Reform, p. 91.
5. DA Pam 550-39, pp. 46-53.
6. Walterhouse, pp. 91-92.
7. Ibid., pp. 90-92.
8. Ibid.
9. DA Pam 550-39, pp. 53-55.
10. Ibid., pp. 53-61.
11. Charles M. Simpson III, Inside the Green Berets, p. 200.
12. Ibid., pp. 200-201.
13. Ibid., pp. 201; 204-206.
14. Ibid., pp. 201-203.

CHAPTER V

LAOS

Tiny Laos on the Indochinese Peninsula presented an entirely different opportunity for MCA than did the preceeding countries. Laos is contiguous to the People's Republic of China and all of the states on the Indochinese Peninsula except for Malaya. Its strategic significance in the era of containment, therefore, far outweighed the value of its material assets. A former French colony, Laos was granted full independence in 1954 under the Geneva Agreements which terminated the French Indochina War. It was ill-prepared for existence as an independent state in a politically unstable part of the world.¹

SOURCES OF INSTABILITY

The ruling elite were drawn from the royal family. They were split apart by factionalism, however, and were more concerned with jockeying for power rather than administering and developing the country. A strong Communist Party existed, led by one of the royal factions. Other factions sought to either neutralize the country or to impose a rightist military government on it. Although parliamentary government had been introduced under the French, it had not proven to be institutionally viable.²

Like most other Asian countries, Laos essentially had two classes--the royalty and other persons of relatively great wealth and influence and the peasantry. The peasantry were either lowland rice farmers or semi-

nomadic mountain tribesmen whose principal crops were upland rice or maize. Land was equitably distributed and overpopulation was not a problem. Laotian society provided a strong social structure but few material benefits.³

The basis of the country's economy was subsistence farming and to a much lesser degree cottage industry (goldsmithing, for example). The country had no significant natural resources and was not an exporter of agricultural produce.⁴

Militarily, the fledgling state proved unable to defend itself from Chinese, North Vietnamese and internal Communist inroads. This led to a negotiated neutralization of the country in 1962 which was intended to restore the status quo ante by installing a tripartite government representing all indigenous factions (rightist, neutralist, and communist). This diplomatic solution slowed Communist inroads only slightly more than the previous military action had.^{5, 6}

MCA PROGRAMS

The history of MCA in Laos begins two short years after independence. In 1956, the Royal Laotian Army began a program of MCA which drew upon the Filipino experience. It grew in scope as it began to enjoy modest successes. As in Indonesia and Korea, however, the proliferation of Laotian and foreign agencies involved in the civic action effort compounded the difficulty of the MCA mission.⁷

Under the tutelage of U.S. Army Civil Affairs advisors, the Laotian Army created and trained six-man civic action teams which were dispatched throughout the country to help improve the living conditions of the people and concurrently cause the people to identify with the source of this

assistance--the central government. The U.S. advisors also conducted training for the Laotian officers supervising the program and assisted the Royal Laotian Army G5 in its planning efforts. It is gratifying to note that members of the AFP and Filipino civilians who had benefitted from an earlier U.S. Army MCA advisory effort returned the favor by sharing their experience in MCA with the Laotians.⁸

By 1960, when large scale fighting began among the competing factions, the Royal Laotian Army had made modest progress in improving the economic and living conditions of its fellow countrymen. Unfortunately, the MCA program was terminated and its participants assigned combat duties. Although U.S. advisors attempted to have MCA resumed after the fighting subsided, they were not effective in this endeavor. The truce accompanied by creation of the tripartite government in 1962, ended their attempts to have the Royal Laotian Army resume MCA.⁹

ANALYSIS

The MCA effort was probably doomed to failure, because of the distracting influence of factional warfare within the ruling elite and the inability of the Royal Laotian Army to protect the country from outside military influences (North Vietnam and the People's Republic of China). However, it cannot be said that military forces were ineffective in their mission. Their modest successes until 1960, indicate that, given time and lack of "interference", MCA can succeed even in such a relatively backward country as Laos. The Laotian experience (as did the Korean and Indonesian) points out the need for unity of both command and effort in MCA. Perhaps more could have been accomplished quicker if there had not been competition among various Laotian and foreign agencies, each wanting

to conduct civic action in its own way.

ENDNOTES

1. Harry F. Walterhouse, A Time to Build: Military Civic Action: Medium for Economic Development and Social Reform, pp. 93-94.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 93-95.
4. Ibid., p. 93.
5. Ibid., p. 94.
6. U.S. Department of the Army, Department of the Army Pamphlet 550-58, pp. 3-5.
7. Walterhouse, pp. 95-96.
8. Ibid., pp. 96-98.
9. Ibid., p. 98.

CHAPTER VI

VIETNAM

South Vietnam (or more correctly the Republic of Vietnam) was, like Laos, another product of the Geneva Agreements of 1954 which ended the French Indochina War.^{1, 2} The country resulted from the partition of Vietnam at roughly the 17th Parallel. The Northern half of Vietnam (The Democratic Republic of Vietnam) was ceded to the Communist Nationalists or Vietminh led by Ho Chi Minh. The Southern half of Vietnam (The State of Vietnam) was to remain free of Communist domination pending the outcome of national reunification elections, which, as it turned out, were never to occur.^{3, 4}

SOURCES OF INSTABILITY

In addition to the "temporary" partition of the country, the Geneva Agreements called for the withdrawal of Communist forces from the South and gave non-Communist Northerners the opportunity to move to the South. Although thousands of Northerners were allowed to move to the South by the Northern government, the latter government did not honor the part of the agreement calling for it to withdraw its forces from the South. They merely went underground.^{5, 6}

Ngo Dinh Diem was appointed prime minister of the State of Vietnam by its head of state, Emperor Bao Dai, in June 1954. By October 1955, Diem had destroyed the power of the politico-religious sects and established

himself as the head of state of a new entity, the Republic of Vietnam. Diem refused to conduct national reunification elections and began to firmly ally himself with the U.S., giving rise to Communist insurgency and renewed nationalistic fervor. The U.S. was pictured by the Communists as merely replacing the French as an oppressive colonialistic power. Diem's government and those which followed after Diem's overthrow in 1963 were autocratic and self-serving. They were generally led by corrupt and incompetent members of the upper class who had little or no understanding of the aspirations of the peasantry whom they ruled. Although a largely French-trained bureaucracy was in place, it was more concerned with self-perpetuation and lining its own pockets by selling government "favors". The Communists were able to capitalize on the preceeding governmental weakness to advance their own cause.^{7, 8}

The principal religious factions in Vietnam were the Catholics and the Buddhists. The latter felt that the largely Northern Catholic ruling class denied them effective participation in the government. As a consequence, the Buddhists were a constant source of instability. The majority of the people of South Vietnam were rice farmers who were politically naive and if left to their own devices, would have been reasonably content with whatever government was in power.⁹

South Vietnam was agriculturally self-sufficient and had the capability to export rice under stable political conditions. It had little manufacturing industry but a wealth of extractive industries such as rubber and timber.¹⁰

The South Vietnamese armed forces were led by individuals who had been trained as sergeants and junior officers in the French forces and were ill-prepared to assume the responsibilities of senior officers. Many

officers advanced to the senior ranks not due to professional competence, but to nepotism and payoffs. The military ran much of the country's administrative structure at all levels of government and used the powers of their respective offices to ensure their own personal gain. The military had little or no identification with the people and often extorted food and money from them.¹¹

With U.S. assistance, the South Vietnamese government launched the strategic hamlet program. This population control program attempted unsuccessfully to physically separate the people from the Communist insurgents. It ignored the strong attachment of the people to their ancestral homes and was not designed to improve their economic lot. No action was taken to win loyalty for the government by showing that it was more concerned than the Communists about their well-being.¹²

MCA PROGRAMS

The U.S. advisory structure in Vietnam did not actively encourage MCA as had its counterparts in other Asian countries. Although it saw to it that South Vietnamese officers received Civil Affairs training in the U.S., the advisory structure did not advise and assist these officers in practicing what they had learned. The U.S. military advisory effort was principally concerned with enhancing the combat effectiveness of the country's armed forces rather than addressing the root causes of the insurgency. It was not until mid-1964 that the advisory element created a structure to advocate and support MCA. This resulted in the loss of eight precious years.¹³

With the introduction of U.S. ground combat forces in 1965, the conflict in South Vietnam took a new turn. A massive U.S. effort to save

South Vietnam from the Communist insurgency began to emerge.¹⁴ A myriad of agencies became involved in the civic action effort which was being conducted as open warfare raged over the country. Vietnamese and U.S. civilian and military agencies conducted competing and counterproductive civic action efforts. Again, unity of command and effort were lacking.^{15, 16}

U.S. military forces conducted medical civic action programs (MEDCAPS) and other forms of MCA. However, these programs were conducted on a unilateral basis which were of little value in improving the image of the government and its military. Additionally, many of the programs were one-shot affairs. U.S. Army forces moved on leaving behind no Vietnamese capability to sustain their efforts. The Vietnamese people had little or no interest in sustaining the U.S. programs because they had nothing invested in them. A classic example of this paradigm is the story told by a U.S. CA expert about the Vietnamese village which was provided with loads of earth with which to make elevated paths to get them out of the monsoon mud. After several weeks, when the Vietnamese made no effort to build paths, the U.S. forces which had provided the earth asked why. They were informed that it was the U.S. forces' earth and that the villagers were waiting for them to come back and complete their task. When informed that such action would not be forthcoming, the villagers grudgingly made paths but in a haphazard and uncoordinated manner.¹⁷

Although U.S. Army advisors at the lower levels of government and U.S. Army Special Forces in their A camps advised and assisted their counterparts in conducting relatively effective and sustained MCA, their efforts addressed a very small portion of South Vietnam's stability needs. These small-scale efforts had what the large ones lacked: the

involvement of the Vietnamese military and the Vietnamese people, both of whom were sustained by the advice and support of U.S. Army forces over the long term. If this type of program could have been built upon nationally during the early years of the insurgency, perhaps the outcome in Vietnam would have been different.^{18, 19}

The creation of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) Directorate within the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) in 1967 to unify U.S. support of the South Vietnamese IDAD effort proved to be an ill-fated action. CORDS was never able to get the Vietnamese to unify their IDAD efforts, because the Vietnamese were more interested in self-aggrandizement than in mission accomplishment. Also CORDS was more oriented toward pacification (population and resources control [PRC] and eradication of insurgent infrastructure), actions which are inconsistent with an advisory and assistance role in MCA and, due to their unpopular nature, best left to native armed forces.^{20, 21, 22}

ANALYSIS

Well before the withdrawal of the last U.S. ground combat troops from Vietnam in March 1974, it was clear that the U.S. Army's MCA effort in South Vietnam had failed. The responsibility for this failure is attributable to many factors. First and foremost, the South Vietnamese government did not have the interests of its people at heart. It was unwilling to reform itself and to exert its efforts in bringing stability back to the lives of the peasantry. Its actions, if anything, buttressed the Communist cause. The U.S. advisory structure failed to attempt to focus the government's attention on pressing economic and social needs which the Communists were drawing upon for support. The MCA programs

which were implemented at the national level, did not address basic needs and were marked by infighting and corruption among the responsible Vietnamese agencies. Much of the U.S. Army MCA was of the "here today and gone tomorrow" ilk and failed to involve the Vietnamese military and the Vietnamese people in its conduct and sustainment. The Vietnamese never achieved unity of command and effort in their MCA programs. While the U.S. finally achieved them, the structure for its achievement neglected MCA and further weakened its credibility by placing it under the same umbrella with unpopular PRC and insurgent infrastructure eradication programs. It is little wonder that the situation in South Vietnam was no more stable upon our departure than it had been upon our arrival.

ENDNOTES

1. Harry F. Walterhouse, A Time to Build; Military Civic Action: Medium for Economic Development and Social Reform, p. 94.
2. U. S. Department of the Army, Department of the Army Pamphlet 550-32, p. 58-60. (hereafter referred to as "DA Pam 550-32").
3. Ibid.
4. Stanley Karnow, Vietnam: A History, p. 204-205; 224.
5. DA Pam 550-32, pp. 58-60.
6. Karnow, pp. 204-205; 222; 226-227.
7. DA Pam 550-32, pp. 58-64.
8. Karnow, pp. 230-239; 257; 440-443.
9. Ibid., pp. 232; 277-281.
10. Ibid., p. 117.
11. Ibid., pp. 187; 233; 238.
12. Ibid., pp. 255-258.
13. Walterhouse, pp. 114-117.
14. DA Pam 550-32, pp. 64-70.
15. Interview with Anthony J. Auletta, U.S. Department of the Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, Civil Affairs Branch, 19 January 1990. (hereafter referred to as "Auletta").
16. Neil Sheehan, A Bright Shining Lie; John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam, pp. 537-539.
17. Auletta.
18. U.S. Department of the Army, Vietnam Studies: U.S. Army Special Forces, pp. 17-18; 41; 59; 62; 85; 87; 98; 121; 124; 155; 164; 170; 171.
19. Auletta.
20. Ibid.
21. Sheehan, pp. 652-660; 731-733.
22. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-20 (Final Draft), pp. 2-42 - 2-43; 2-45 - 2-47.

CHAPTER VII

THAILAND

Unlike the countries studied heretofore, Thailand had never experienced colonial rule. It had been left to evolve in its own way, free from unwanted outside influences. It had not experienced liberation from an occupying power, successful revolution against a colonial power, or peaceful independence from a colonial power (or some combination of the preceeding) as had the other countries in question. This makes Thailand a one-of-a-kind case study of the effectiveness of MCA in a non-post colonial environment.¹

SOURCES OF INSTABILITY

Thailand has been a constitutional monarchy since 1932, when a revolt by progressive elements in the military ended the absolute monarchy of King Rama VII. However, the country has failed to develop an orderly means for changes in political power. Such changes have come from within the government by means of coups. Fortunately all have been relatively bloodless. The government has been principally led since the 1932 revolt by either military men or "former" military men. Most decision making has been on a consensus basis which is slow and frustrating but does bring a certain degree of stability to the process. The government has been marked with corruption and anti-democratic sentiment.²

Thai society is far from homogeneous. It consists of many minority

groups who at various times have been significantly disaffected from the central government. The hill people in the North had previously suffered from neglect and indifference by the central government and began to look to the Communist insurgents to help them improve their lot. The Moslem Malays in the far South have agitated for a separate Islamic state. The Khmers in the southern border areas of the Northeast adjoining Kampuchea have been a fertile ground for Communist agitation, as have been the Vietnamese in other parts of the Northeast. The Chinese, who are not fully assimilated into Thai society, are another divisive social element. In fact, it is reputed that all of the senior leadership of the Communist Party of Thailand are of Chinese ancestry. A final significant disunifying social factor has been the loss of peasant lands to absentee landlords. This has created an increasingly negative attitude toward the landlords and the government on the part of the peasants.³

The country has been agrarian in nature but has also had significant extractive industries (such as semi-precious stones, gold, and timber). Much of the country historically has been served with a well-developed communications infrastructure (road, rail, intercoastal, and air transportation as well as telecommunications). It has begun to develop modern manufacturing industry to move it further ahead economically.^{4, 5}

As previously stated, the Thai military has effectively ruled the country since 1932. While the military has not encouraged the development of constitutional democracy, its rule has otherwise been enlightened, especially by Asian standards. Unlike South Vietnam, for instance, the military has been genuinely concerned about the welfare of all of the country's citizens, not just that of a favored few. Also, the military responded to active Phase I insurgency in the early 1960's in a

progressive manner and has continued this effort unabated.^{6, 7}

MCA PROGRAMS

The first U.S. Army involvement in MCA in Thailand was in May 1962. At the request of the Thai government, a U.S. Army Battle Group was dispatched to Thailand's border with Laos. Its mission was to ensure that the Communist onslaught in Laos did not spill over into Thailand. Although the battle group was withdrawn from Thailand following the truce in Laos, it left a lasting legacy. During its stay in Thailand, the soldiers of the battle group conducted an MCA program in its area of operations. The efficacy of the program apparently so impressed the Thais that their Border Patrol Police continued to sustain the program in the area after the U.S. Army forces departed.⁸

Subsequent U.S. support for MCA was provided by the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group--Thailand and led to the development of a highly effective program for the entire country. The military and paramilitary (Thai Border Police) and civil agencies of the Thai government developed an effective civic action program as a part of their overall Civil, Police, Military (CPM) program for countering insurgency. MCA has been used to address the legitimate socioeconomic and political grievances of the people in order to deprive the Communist insurgents of otherwise exploitable issues. The CPM program is a coordinated and integrated effort which contrasts favorably with the U.S. in-country effort which has not been notable for either unity of command or unity of effort.⁹

It is instructive to learn how the Thais practice MCA in conjunction with their own military exercises as well as in conjunction with combined exercises with U.S. military forces. Prior to an exercise such as Cobra

Gold, which is a joint combined Thai-U.S. exercise, teams consisting of personnel from the National Rural Development Agency and members of the Royal Thai Army Civil Affairs (CA) Corps deploy into the rural areas where the exercise will be conducted. They inform the communities in the exercise area of the pending exercise and why it is going to be conducted. The teams survey the area to identify prospective MCA projects. During and after the exercise, the teams conduct MCA programs and repair or reimburse for maneuver damage. This ensures that civil-military relations are not adversely affected by the exercise and provides additional opportunities for the conduct of MCA.¹⁰

Since Cobra Gold '86, USAR CA soldiers from the 351st Civil Affairs Command and its subordinate units have participated in MCA during the operation. A small group of soldiers was sent to observe the '86 exercise and to identify MCA needs with which the Reservists could assist. It became clear during this survey that in addition to MEDCAPs conducted by medical personnel from the AC 3d Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (SFG), there were many other opportunities for the conduct of MCA and that they far exceeded the capabilities of Special Forces (SF) operational detachments. During the last three years, the involvement of CA Reservists has expanded dramatically. During the most recent exercise, more than 30 CA Reservists were participants and between \$85,000-\$100,000 in the form of Title 10 MCA funds were allocated to their MCA efforts. All MCA has been conducted in conjunction with Thai forces and supports Thailand's overall MCA effort. In addition, the CA Reservists received invaluable training in the planning and execution of MCA and in working in conjunction with foreign counterparts in a deployed environment.¹¹

ANALYSIS

The overall Thai MCA effort has proven effective in bringing stability to the country. Despite occasional lapses, the Thais have realized that MCA requires an indefinite commitment until all likely sources of instability have been alleviated. The Thai leadership has promoted constructive, evolutionary change to protect their country from insurgency and has developed innovative means for utilization of MCA. U.S. advice and assistance has coordinated and focused upon supporting the overall Thai program. It effectively uses Total Army resources to accomplish the MCA mission. Perhaps this overall cooperative effort in Thailand is a foretaste of things to come.

ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Army, Department of the Army Pamphlet 550-53, pp. xxi. (hereafter referred to as "DA Pam 550-53").
2. Ibid., pp. 26-52.
3. George K. Tanham, Trial in Thailand, pp. 4-13.
4. Ibid., pp. 13-14.
5. DA Pam 550-53, pp. xv-xvi.
6. Ibid., pp. 26-52.
7. Tanham, pp. 72; 88-93.
8. Harry F. Walterhouse, A Time to Build: Military Civic Action: Medium for Economic Development and Social Reform, p. 30.
9. Tanham, pp. 88-93.
10. Interview with Herbert L. Altshuler, COL, U.S. Department of the Army, 351st Civil Affairs Command, Operations and Plans Division, Mountain View, 18 February 1990.
11. Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII
ACTIVE COMPONENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

This chapter reviews the types of organizational structures which the AC of the U.S. Army has employed in the conduct of MCA in the PACOM AOR.

SPECIAL ACTION FORCE ASIA (SAFASIA)¹

During the period 1961-74, the predominant Army organization conducting MCA in the PACOM AOR was SAFAsia. It consisted of the 1st SFG (-) (HHC and Signal Company and Companies A, B, and C) (Company D had been detached, redesignated as 46th Special Forces Company, and was serving in Thailand) and attached elements. Those elements attached were the 97th CA Group (later 1st CA Battalion), 441st Military Intelligence Detachment, 539th Engineer Detachment, 400th Army Security Agency Special Operations Detachment, and the 156th Medical Detachment. Of the attached organizations, all but the intelligence units had a role in MCA. Also, all of the SF units had a role in MCA.

Much of the MCA conducted by SAFAsia has been recounted above and need not be repeated here. However, it should be noted that it also conducted successful operations in Thailand and in the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) (later the Compact States) in the South Pacific (Marshalls) where two U.S. Army civic action detachments are operational to this date. The SAFAsia MCA operations in the TTPI did much to improve local infrastructure, health, and communications. These

operations were conducted principally using troops from the 539th Engineer Detachment augmented with medical and other personnel as required.^{2, 3}

The keys to SAFAsia's successes were manifold. Among them were area orientation (acquainted with the areas both geographically and culturally and often spoke the language); MCA skills, such as engineering, medical, public health, sanitary engineering, and maturity (most were senior NCOs). Also, most of the officers had substantial years of experience and training in their field of expertise. Coupled with a desire to accomplish the mission, they were unbeatable.

The SF soldiers from the 1st SFG also played a significant role in MCA. Soldiers with medical and engineering skills had a readily apparent role in MCA. Those with Infantry, operations and intelligence, and communications skills provided command and control for deployed civic action detachments as well as using skills acquired through cross-training and just plain strong backs to perform MCA itself.

While the benefits to host nations were significant and developed good will for the U.S., did SAFAsia serve a larger purpose? The answer is yes. By advising and assisting host nation (HN) military forces with their IDAD efforts early on, SAFAsia aided them in either preventing insurgencies or nipping them in the bud. The public standing of HN military forces was also enhanced. SAFAsia spared the U.S. from having to commit significant resources (such as money, equipment, and manpower) for foreign internal defense (FID). It also helped to prevent future Vietnams from occurring. Use of SAFAsia in this manner made it a low-cost means to help others to preserve stability rather than an expensive force-in-waiting for the conduct of counterinsurgency (CI) or insurgency in the PACOM AOR. However, if the need should arise for such action, SAFAsia

soldiers were well-trained for the mission. Their ongoing MCA mission helped them to maintain language skills; update area studies; and develop a good relationship with HN military forces and key civilians. Both of the preceeding are prerequisites for success in either a CI or an insurgency environment. The bottom line is that SAFAsia was a viable organizational structure from a cost-benefit point of view throughout the spectrum of conflict. It could serve an ongoing national purpose during peacetime "training or preparation for war" and actually enhance its readiness for its wartime mission.

SECURITY ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS

The foregoing is not to say that SAFAsia has been the exclusive organizational means by which the U.S. Army has conducted successful MCA in the PACOM AOR. Great credit must be given to the security assistance organizations (SAOs) (such as JUSMAG-Phil, -Thai, etc.). In the Philippines, as set forth in Chapter III, the JUSMAG alone conducted the successful MCA advisory operation associated with Magsaysay's IDAD campaign. Its advisors provided invaluable advice to Magsaysay, the AFP, and the PC. In later years, they continued in this role and also brokered support from SAFAsia and other sources to further assist the AFP and the PC. SAOs in other countries (such as Indonesia and Thailand) provided equally invaluable support to the military and paramilitary forces of their respective HN.

CONVENTIONAL COMBAT FORCES

In Korea and Thailand, conventional combat forces have performed invaluable service in the conduct of MCA. The principal drawback of MCA

by conventional combat forces, however, is that its effectiveness is often limited by a lack of MCA expertise. In Vietnam, for instance, MCA conducted by U.S. Army conventional combat forces was generally of no lasting benefit to the local populace because it did not encourage them to address their needs on a sustained basis and did nothing to build good will for the Vietnamese armed forces. Another drawback of MCA by conventional combat forces is that it is generally not sustained by them because large forces cannot normally remain in a HN beyond the duration of a short-term exercise or show of force without creating a political liability for the HN.

ANALYSIS

The best combination of organizational structures for U.S. conduct of MCA has been SAOs with sufficient staff expertise to advise or assist HN forces with MCA. They also should have the capability to call for outside assistance when they recognize that the tasks are beyond their means.

If that assistance is to be AC military, the long-defunct Special Action Force has proven to be the best source of low-cost, expert augmentation. Currently, however, the best that the AC military can provide is teams created on an ad hoc basis from the existing force structure. The vast majority of which have neither the area or technical orientation which made the Special Action Force especially suitable for the MCA mission. However, other capable resources are presently available as will be discussed in the next chapter.

ENDNOTES

1. Unless otherwise indicated, information is derived from the author's personal recollections as a former member of SAFAsia (1969-1971).
2. Charles M. Simpson III, Inside the Green Berets, pp. 208-209.
3. Interview with John H. Donnelly, COL, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Special Operations Command, Plans and Policy Division, Tampa, 16 February 1990.

CHAPTER IX

RESERVE COMPONENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

This chapter reviews the type of organizational structure which the USAR has employed in the conduct of MCA in the PACOM AOR.

USAR CA FORCES¹

As alluded to in the preceeding chapter, USAR forces constitute an additional source of qualified MCA assets within the U.S. Army. Since at least 1962, USAR CA forces with a PACOM AOR orientation have been conducting and updating area studies of countries throughout the PACOM AOR. Conduct of these studies provided them with significant familiarity with the AOR. This enhanced their capability to advise or assist in MCA. Also their area studies assisted PACOM, USARPAC (later U.S. Army Western Command (WESTCOM)), and SAOs throughout the AOR in developing prospective MCA opportunities. They also assisted SAFAsia in preparation for deployment on MCA missions.²

Under a different name, The Friendly Allied Nation Support (FANS) Program of the 351st CA Command has, since the late 1970s, provided similar assistance to both planners and operators. Although principally oriented toward the acquisition of wartime logistical support, these studies are immediately adaptable to the support of MCA deployments should they be increased in support of the U.S. LIC Strategy in the PACOM AOR.

In Thailand, since Cobra Gold '86, elements of the 351st have been

active participants in MCA. They have advised and assisted Thai forces (military and paramilitary) and civilian agencies in the conduct of MCA. Typical activities consist of training requested by and for Thai forces and civilian agencies (such as preventive medicine lectures and workshops and medical cross-training), as well as assisting them in the conduct of various MCA projects (such as well drilling, MEDCAPs, and health education fairs) using MCA funding. Although the duration of their presence has been limited, this has not affected the completion/sustainment of the projects. Most are completed during the deployment and sustained thereafter by Thai forces and civilian agencies which the CA soldiers advised or assisted as well as by the civilian beneficiaries of the project. Other projects are both completed and sustained by Thai forces, civilian agencies, and civilian beneficiaries.

USAR CA soldiers bring skills and experience to bear which the AC either could not attract or could not attract and retain. These soldiers are inculcated with the military ethic and, therefore, are willing to deploy to areas where most civilians with similar skills either would not go or would only go at great expense to the U.S. Government. USAR CA soldiers have established reputations and are not seen as having merely a short-term commitment to advising or assisting Thai forces and civilian agencies because they or fellow soldiers have come back from year-to-year to work with Thai forces and civilian agencies.

Like the AC soldiers of SAFAsia, the USAR CA soldiers have been able to accomplish peacetime training requirements while conducting MCA projects which support the U.S. LIC Strategy within the PACOM AOR. Also like their AC forebears, the USAR soldiers have better prepared themselves to accomplish at least a portion of their wartime mission. They have

acquired and maintained intercultural relationship skills which will serve them well in time of war. Also they have become familiar with their prospective AOR and at least some of the military and civilians with whom they will be dealing in wartime. All of this is accomplished in 39 days a year. Despite the limitation of not being able to perform significant long-term MCA, these RC soldiers are valuable assets in the overall PACOM MCA effort.

ANALYSIS

As stated in Chapter VIII, other assets are available to SAOs in addition to AC forces for the conduct of MCA. They are the USAR CA soldiers who, on a part-time basis, can either conduct or augment MCA programs. Even if SAFAsia were to be recreated, the USAR would still have a significant role in these programs. It would add depth to MCA programs by providing otherwise unavailable expertise at a reasonable cost.

ENDNOTES

1. Unless otherwise indicated, information is derived from Interview with Herbert L. Altshuler, COL, U.S. Department of the Army, 351st Civil Affairs Command, Operations and Plans Division, Mountain View, 18 February 1990.

2. Information is derived from the author's personal recollections as a former member of SAFAsia (1969-1971).

CHAPTER X
ISSUES, SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUES FACING THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The national leadership must first ascertain if it wishes to employ MCA as an instrument of military power in the PACOM AOR. Assuming that the answer is yes, there remain critical issues which they must address before actually employing MCA within a given country in the PACOM AOR. The remainder of this subchapter will explore those issues.

What Conditions is MCA designed to alleviate?

The case studies in Chapters II-VII show that MCA can be used to alleviate many of the causes of instability. A government can enhance the image of its armed forces by effectively employing them in MCA. By extension, the government can also enhance its own image because the people perceive that it is genuinely interested in improving their welfare. The training received by HN forces in planning and conducting MCA can also aid by improving the government's collective ability to successfully plan, undertake, and sustain government programs designed to improve the well being of the people. Economically, MCA can create communications networks, such as farm-to-market roads which enable former subsistence farmers to gain access to markets for their excess crops and have an opportunity to earn income which was formerly denied them. MCA can also create new industries, such as the timber industry in Indonesia,

which provide new and greater sources of income for the population. As stated earlier, the HN military gains in standing in the eyes of the people. In an IDAD situation, this may become a critical factor for success. If the military has credibility with the citizens, they will support it against the insurgents, even when it must take unpopular actions, such as PRC measures. A final aspect is that MCA can be used to alleviate social conditions which lead to instability. A good example is the resettlement program in the Philippines under which landless peasants and soldiers were given free government land and were assisted in settling it by the military as part of its MCA program.

When can MCA be used to alleviate the Foregoing and Similar Conditions?

The key requisite for MCA appears to be genuine HN government support for the program. This support cannot be of the lip-service type which the government practiced in South Vietnam. MCA will not be effective in the long-term unless key leaders of the government support changes, such as land reform, elimination of governmental corruption, and implementation of democratic reforms, which are necessary to eliminate causes of instability. These key leaders must be honest (by their own society's standards, not ours) and competent. They must earn the trust and confidence of the population. An excellent example of this type of leader was Magsaysay in the Philippines. Also the HN military and other governmental agencies must be enlisted in the process if it is to be seen as a program of and by the HN rather than of the U.S.

What should be the Role of the Indigenous People in MCA?

The intended target of MCA, the people of the HN, must be actively involved with HN and U.S. Army forces in the conduct of MCA. U.S. Army

forces must restrain their natural inclination to get the project completed expeditiously by doing it themselves. They must keep in mind their role in MCA as specified in the JCS definition on page 4. Local leaders must identify needed projects subject to approval by the HN military and other appropriate agencies. Local leaders must also be used to enlist the people in the project. To the largest extent possible, locally available materials should be used rather than ones imported from the U.S. This accomplishes two things: 1) The people are familiar with using the materials and can more easily build with and maintain them. 2) The project is seen as a people's project rather than as a U.S. one; thus the people have more interest in both conducting the project and sustaining it. The latter statement also applies to having the people do most of the work. Their sweat equity translates into pride of ownership.

What should be the Role of the HN Military in MCA?

The HN military, because of its organizational skills should be involved in planning and conducting the HN MCA program. However, at the implementation level, it should provide only that level of leadership that is required to assist local leaders in identifying and then accomplishing the MCA projects which they have designated. To the extent that materials cannot be obtained locally through donation and/or purchase, the HN military should provide them. Finally, the HN military should roll up their sleeves and work directly with the people in accomplishing the project at hand. This hands-on effort has often been proven to be the major factor in causing the people to perceive the HN military (and government) as being genuinely interested in them and committed to

improving their lot.

What should be the Role of U.S. Army Forces in MCA?

In many instances, the most effective role of U.S. Army forces is to provide advice on the conduct of MCA to civilian and military leaders at the national level. This helps to ensure that MCA programs are seen as native in origin at the local level and that they help to create loyalty for the HN government rather than the U.S. Provision of advice at the national level also helps to prevent long-range dependence on the U.S. for MCA programs. Also, U.S. Army forces can assist leaders at the national level in obtaining funding for worthwhile programs of MCA or programs that support MCA (such as Magsaysay obtaining funds to improve the pay of the AFP and the PC so they would no longer need to extort food or money from the people in order to support their families). At lower levels, U.S. Army forces may be needed to train HN forces in the conduct of MCA and to provide technical assistance in areas where HN expertise is lacking. Examples of the latter would be the inventory process which SAFAsia conducted in Indonesia and its assistance with the assembly of the Sawmill. However, in all such cases, U.S. Army forces must be as invisible to the people as possible. HN personnel should assist in the process to the largest extent possible and be trained to take over at the earliest reasonable date. If for any reason, U.S. Army forces must be actively involved in conducting MCA, they must make it apparent that they are doing so in support of the HN military rather than as an independent effort. Again, working with sleeves rolled up with the HN military and the people will support this perception that the U.S. is not in charge.

Which U.S. Army Forces should the National Leadership use to conduct MCA?

Although U.S. Army conventional combat forces have effectively conducted MCA, such as in Korea and Thailand, by following the preceeding rules, they often fail in MCA (as in Vietnam) because they tend to do it all themselves. This creates dependency on the part of the recipients and results in projects which are not sustained due to the lack of sweat equity. Also, their projects do not necessarily address the needs of the HN and thereby fail to serve its purposes. Unless assisted by qualified CA personnel, such as in Korea and in Cobra Gold in Thailand, it is probably best not to conduct MCA using U.S. Army conventional combat forces. The first line of defense in MCA, so to speak, should be U.S. Army forces assigned to the in-country security assistance organization. These soldiers have the necessary language skills, rapport with local civilian and military officials, and can best assess the training and materiel requirements of the HN for the conduct of MCA. They can, if within their means, also advise or assist in the planning and conduct of MCA in conjunction with their HN counterparts. If more extensive support is indicated by the security assistance organization assessment, mobile training teams can be requested. It is best if these are principally drawn from area-oriented SF and CA assets. In some instances, however, greater assistance may be needed, for example U.S. Army Engineers with a construction capability. However, if at all possible, it would be better to provide the HN with the engineer equipment and training and let them do the work. Also, the in-country SAO can arrange for effective MCA to be conducted during joint combined exercises (such as Cobra Gold). Area oriented SF and CA forces could be employed in conjunction with a larger conventional exercise or even as part of a smaller joint combined

unconventional warfare exercise.

SUMMARY

In summary, this study began by looking at the historic involvement of U.S. Army forces in domestic MCA. It established that the U.S. Army had a long and successful tradition of such involvement. The study then looked at the influence of two seminal events (civic action successes in the Republic of Korea and the Republic of the Philippines) which led to a mandate for the U.S. Army to conduct MCA as an integral part of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Program throughout the PACOM AOR until the early 1970s. Finally, it covered the demise of significant MCA in the latter days of the Nixon Administration and, during the last five years, the start of its slow resurgence. It argued that there is a role for significant MCA by U.S. Army forces in support of U.S. Strategy in the PACOM AOR.

The study continued by focusing on six countries where U.S. Army forces have been employed in MCA within the PACOM AOR. It reviewed the issues which faced each country at the time of initiation of an MCA program. The study dissected each MCA program in detail and attempted to determine its success or failure and the reasons therefor. It also analysed what U.S. Army forces were committed and their effectiveness in accomplishing the mission. Subsequently, the study compared the different types of organizational structure which the AC and the USAR had employed in the conduct of MCA and attempted to distill therefrom an evaluation of these structures both intra- and inter-component. After that, it attempted to set forth some food for thought for our national leadership as to when MCA is appropriate and, if so, how it should be conducted if

its effectiveness is to be maximized.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions drawn from this analysis are that U.S. Army forces have played an effective role in the conduct of MCA in the PACOM AOR when they have been employed under circumstances where they had a reasonable prospect of success because the country was receptive to MCA and because MCA used the right forces at the right time and in the right manner (such as in Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand).

In those cases where MCA failed (for example Indonesia under Sukarno and Vietnam, but not Laos, where the problem was inability to protect the country from outside military influences), responsibility must be placed upon HN leaders who were not committed to constructive change and only used MCA as window dressing or to buy themselves time. Alternatively, responsibility must be placed on U.S. leaders who employed the wrong forces or employed forces in the wrong manner (such as in Vietnam). In either event, MCA had little or no lasting benefit.

No component of the U.S. Army has a corner on the MCA market. However, the greatest strengths of the AC (especially its SF and security assistance organizations) are that it can take on longer-range projects and may have better language bona fides than the USAR CA forces, because it is a full-time force. The USAR CA forces, on the other hand, have a wealth of experience and talent which cannot be found in the AC (for instance, one of the USAR CA soldiers who participated in the most recent Cobra Gold exercise was an ethnic Thai who had settled in California and enlisted in a USAR CA unit).¹ This would seem to argue for a complementary mix of AC and USAR forces to be assigned to MCA to maximize

the impacts of their respective attributes.

In these days of constrained budgets, the foregoing organizational structure would enable the Army to recreate the special action force on a less costly but highly effective basis. A special action force strategically located on the Pacific Rim, or, perhaps, with its AC element located in the Pacific would be ideally positioned to plan and conduct MCA throughout the PACOM AOR.

DOD, specifically OSD, must ensure that within its present budget, maximum HCA funding is allocated to MCA projects within the PACOM AOR. It must also advocate to the national leadership the benefits which can accrue to the U.S. by giving the U.S. Army the opportunity to conduct MCA on a more significant basis than is presently the case.

The national leadership (the President and key members of the Administration, to include the Secretaries of State and Defense, and the Congress) must realize that MCA still has a significant role to play in advancing U.S. interests in the Pacific by helping receptive countries to remedy the causes of instability within their respective societies. It must also realize that civilian agencies, such as AID, are often not in a position to effectively deal with the predominately military governments and the austere conditions under which the people in a significant number of these countries live.

Increased MCA by U.S. Army forces may well enable the U.S. to avoid the costs of commitments of armed force to restore stability to nations in the PACOM AOR. MCA is a cost effective and noninflammatory means by

which the national leadership can achieve the ends of U.S. strategy in the
PACOM AOR.

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